

9504B: Critical Political Theory (2017-18)

Instructor: Nandita Biswas Mellamphy

Course Description: Is the global digital revolution currently underway *enriching* or conversely, *impoverishing* democracy? This course explores how the internet and new media/communication technologies transform and constrain, as well as enable and disable democratic theories and practices. Attention will be paid to developing rigorous and critical interpretations and analyses of various democratic theories, especially 'deliberative', 'agonistic'/'radical', 'cyber', 'fugitive,' and 'queer' theories of democracy.

Selected Course Texts (on order at the campus Bookstore):

- *Democracy and Difference: Contesting the Boundaries of the Political*, ed. Seyla Benhabib (Princeton).
- *The Democratic Paradox*, Chantal Mouffe (Verso).
- *Cybering Democracy: Public Space and the Internet*, Diana Saco (Minnesota).
- *Democracy and Other Neoliberal Fantasies: Communicative Capitalism and Left Politics*, Jodi Dean (Duke).
- *Terrorist Assemblages: Homonationalism in Queer Times*, Jasbir Puar (Duke).

Breakdown of Evaluation:

- Seminar Presentation (includes oral and written components): 25%
- Research Essay Proposal (includes oral and written components): 35%
- Final Research Essay: 40%

Learning objectives:

By the end of this course, students will:

- Be familiar with a range of political theories of democracy, as well as develop critical and rigorous interpretations of these theories.
- Have gained an appreciation of the range of approaches and interpretations of democracy that are used in political research.
- Demonstrate an awareness of how power, culture and history condition/influence knowledge formation and be able to situate knowledge historically and contextually
- Demonstrate well developed, independent information literacy and research skills and be able to identify goals for their own professional development and further learning
- Work effectively with others, demonstrating the skills of giving constructive and critical feedback to peers, responding to feedback, and using active listening

* Detailed Weekly Reading Schedule and Course Outline to be posted on course website.